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AUTHOR Apodaca, Mary
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ABSTRACT

The instrument for Colorado's Foreign Language Proficiency Sample Project and directions for its administration are provided in this document. The project is a voluntary, teacher-designed and -administered effort to standardize high school student language proficiency assessment techniques. The materials are used in teacher workshops. The instrument is used to gather student language samples and rate student skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The first section states the rationale for the project, summarizes the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages' (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines for the novice and intermediate levels, outlines the hierarchy of language learning, and compares the number of hours in a typical secondary language class to that of the Foreign Service Institute. The second section contains questions with an explanation of how to conduct an oral interview with a beginning level student. A flow chart for evaluating oral samples is included. Section 3 contains the beginner writing assessment; section 4 contains beginner and mid-level reading and listening assessments; section 5 consists of the mid-level speaking assessment; and the 6th section is the mid-level writing assessment. Section 8 is an appendix containing a memo to users describing the project, rating scales, follow-up memos, and a brief bibliography. (MSE)

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Proficiency Sample Project

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COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STATE OFFICE BUILDING
201 E. COLFAX
DENVER, COLORADO 80203

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Proficiency Sample Project

Mary Apodaca, State Re:Learning School Coordinator
School Effectiveness Unit

Susan Schafer, Director

Office of Federal/State Programs and Services
Arvin C. Blome, Associate Commissioner

Colorado Department of Education
William T. Randall
Commissioner of Education
State of Colorado

November 1990

Colorado State Board of Education

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Art Pansing, Denver ..... First Congressional District

Design Team

Colorado Department of Education
Mary Apodaca, Senior Consultant, Re:Learning School Coordinator
Patricia Burger, Information Coordinator

Local Education Agencies

Foreign Language Supervisors:

Beth Biggs - Denver Co. S/D #1
Phyllis Hurley - El Paso Co. S/D #11 - Colorado Springs

Teachers:

Deloris DeLapp - Adams-Arapahoe S/D #28-J - Aurora
Sandy Stolar/Margaret Vaughn/Jenny Roberts - Douglas Co. S/D Re-1
Rachel Sennert/Teri McNeal - El Paso Co. S/D #11
Martie Grubenhoff - Arapahoe Co. S/D #1 - Englewood

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Section One — Overview

A rationale for the Colorado Department of Education Proficiency Sample Project is provided. A thumbnail sketch of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Proficiency Guidelines appears on page three. It shows what novices and intermediates can do with the language. On page four the number of hours in a typical secondary language class is compared to Foreign Service Institute statistics to demonstrate what we can realistically expect our students to do with our target language.

Taped interviews are played to show a variety of performance levels; English transcriptions are provided. Sometimes taped interviews of their own students are provided by participants or team presenters. Discussion of how and why the interviews differ from typical classroom activities—the implications for the classroom—follow.

Why is it important for teachers to test student proficiency in addition to achievement? And why is it important to standardize the assessment process?

The goals of the statewide effort, the Colorado Foreign Language Proficiency Sample Project, are:

1) **Program evaluation**: Are we doing what we think and say we are doing? Are we teaching our students to speak, write, understand spoken discourse, and read in the target language? Are our courses designed so that all students can succeed? What can our students do?
We'll know by how many students reach the different levels. We need baseline data. If students aren't acquiring the language, or if only certain students are acquiring the language, we need to change our programs. If some teachers are achieving good results, we need to learn from them. Program evaluation can be dynamic if the results are actually used.
As teachers practice evaluating for proficiency and allow students to practice for proficiency, they will be better able to explain to students what they need to do to move up through the proficiency hierarchy. They won't just test their students, they will help them, too. That's why teachers should be in close touch with the designing and administration of assessments.

2) **Accountability**: There isn't any data on how fast high school students acquire languages. The public is demanding hard data from schools. The Colorado State Board of Education wants to know how each program affects the graduation rate, attendance, and overall achievement of students. Yet, teachers need to maintain control of evaluation while allowing their efforts to be verified.

3) **Changing education:** Schools need to change in order to best meet the needs of all of their students. How schools should look in the 1990's and beyond will include looking at student outcomes—**what can students do?**—rather than the number of minutes spent occupying a chair in a classroom, or a grade in a book, or a comparison with their peers.

4) **Student evaluation**: We have an advantage in the foreign language community; we know what a successful graduate of our secondary programs looks like now: an Intermediate High or Advanced speaker/writer/listener/reader of the language. We have objectives and we need to be sure our teaching and testing are aligned with our desired objectives. We must test what we teach. We must add proficiency testing to achievement testing. We need both kinds of tests plus other information (classwork, drafts, projects, etc.) to build a **student portfolio.**

5) **Articulation**: Until educators act in ways that show they understand that foreign language acquisition takes a long time and that we are all one system, that is, that the elementary school is part of the same process as the graduate course, our students will not reach the highest proficiency levels. We must take our students where we find them and move them on. Relying on discrete-point achievement tests to assess progress is like only looking at the top of the soil to decide whether or not to water the garden. The portfolio—a well-rounded picture of the student—may be one answer to the problems of connection that students face when they change teachers, schools, and levels.

6) **Future Plans**: The State of Colorado does not now assess foreign languages. PSP is a voluntary, teacher, school, and/or district-driven assessment effort. This is a working document. You are invited to give us your suggestions. When and if the state does begin to assess foreign language, Colorado teachers will have an informed opinion on how that assessment should be done thanks to their classroom research through this project.

Section One — Overview

A thumbnail sketch of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Proficiency Guidelines for the Novice and Intermediate Levels is provided to show what novices and intermediates can be expected to do with the language. Discussion of a hierarchy of language acquisition helps clarify classroom implications of proficiency.

Novice and Intermediate Levels

Intermediate
Global: Can maintain simple face to face conversations by asking and responding to simple questions
Context: Some informal settings and a limited number of transactional situations
Content: Topics mostly related to self and immediate environment

Novice
Global: Can communicate only minimally with formulaic and rote utterances, lists, and enumerations
Context: Highly predictable common daily settings
Content: Common discrete aspects of daily life

Language Learning Hierarchy

Situational	**Language in context**
Communicative	**Own meaning**
Meaningful	**Memorization process**
Mechanical	**Introduction of material**

The number of hours in a typical secondary language class is compared to Foreign Service Institute statistics to demonstrate what we can realistically expect our students to do with our target language.

Typical school year: 45 minutes x 5 days x 36 weeks = 135 hours

Group I: Afrikaans, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Haitian, Creole, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish

Length of training	Minimum aptitude
8 weeks (240 hours)	Intermediate
16 weeks (480 hours)	Intermediate High
24 weeks (720 hours)	Advanced

Group II: Bulgarian, Dari, Farsi, German, Greek, Hindi, Indonesian, Malay, Urdu

Length of Training	Minimum aptitude
16 weeks	Intermediate
24 weeks	Intermediate High
44 weeks (1320 hours)	Advanced/Advanced High

Group III: Amharic, Bengali, Burmese, Czech, Finnish, Hebrew, Hungarian, Khmer, Lao, Nepali, Filipino, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Sinhala, Thai, Tamil, Turkish, Vietnamese

Length of Training	Minimum aptitude
24 weeks: (720 hours)	Intermediate

Group IV: Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean

Length of Training	Minimum aptitude
24 weeks: (720 hours)	Intermediate

Section Two — Beginner Speaking Assessment

This section contains a corpus of questions with an explanation of how to conduct an interview. A flowchart for evaluating the oral samples is included. Following an explanation of the format, participants interview each other--in their third or fourth language. Discussion follows.

Intermediate Questions

A. Each interview begins (warm-up)

(Use familiar or formal, but continue with the same once you establish)

Hi, how are you?
I'm (first name); what's your name?

B. Next question is one of the numbered questions in Part One.

a) If s/he can't answer, repeat; then try one more numbered question; if the student still cannot answer, skip to Part Three, Novice Questions;
b) If answers, branch (see below); try another; then do Part Two, Student Question.

Part One: Branched questions

The branches are provided to help the interviewer avoid one-answer questions. If the student speaks a lot, the interviewer can branch from the student's utterances.

1. What do you do when you get really hungry and thirsty?
   Teacher branch:
   How are these foods different from those you eat/drink when you're not especially hungry or thirsty?
   Why?

2. I'm a visitor in your town. Tell me what I should visit first and why.
   Teacher branch:
   Tell me about some tourist places in your town.
   Tell me how to get there from here.

3. Tell me about your family.
   Teacher branch:
   Describe [a family member]. (Try one or two)

4. Please describe how the weather has been lately.

Teacher branch:
What do you do when it's nice/bad/x?
What else?

5. What do you do in this season?

Teacher branch:
Tell me about this season in Colorado
What's the weather like?
What can or can't you do?

6. What do you do when you are sick (or tired)?

Teacher branch:
What's more difficult?
How does your mom/dad act?
What do your teachers think?

7. Tell me about your car.

Teacher branch: (If student doesn't have a car)
Well, then, your family car or your dream car.
Describe it.
Describe a driver in your family.

8. Tell me about what you do when you first arrive at school. Whom do you see? Where do you go?

Teacher branch:
What do you do with other students/teachers to get ready for school?

9. Tell me about your typical lunch hour. What do you eat, where, with whom? Tell me about a typical lunch period.

Teacher branch: (If student doesn't eat lunch)
Oh, you don't eat lunch; well, then, when do you eat?

10. Tell me about your friends/one of your friends and things you do together. Where do you go? Who all goes? What do you do?

Teacher branch:
What else? Tell me about that.

11. Tell me about your school: your classes, your school day.
    Teacher branch:
    Tell me about a typical day.
    How about today?
    What are you doing today?

12. What do you do in the evening/after school?
    Teacher branch:
    After/before that?
    And what does your [family] do?

13. What does your dad/mom/older sibling do?
    Teacher branch:
    Where does s/he work?
    What do you think of that job?
    Describe what s/he does.
    (Caution: detailed description of a job is Advanced level question)

14. Tell me about where you and your family go together.
    Teacher branch:
    Describe [one of the places].
    Describe your last trip. (Can be done in present tense.)

15. Tell me about preparing meals and eating at your house.
    Teacher branch:
    What do you do to help?
    Where does your family eat?

16. Tell me about your town/neighborhood.
    Teacher branch:
    What stores are there?
    When do they open/close?
    When do you go and what do you buy?

17. What's your room like at home?
    Teacher branch:
    Tell me about it and what you like and don't like about it.

18. Tell me about where you live.
    Teacher branch:
    Describe your [house, apartment].
    Describe the rooms and how they are decorated.
    Describe the yard, the street, the neighborhood.

19. Tell me about yourself: your physical description.

Teacher branch:
What's your family's national origin?
Your age?
Which languages do you speak?
What do you do besides go to school?

20. Tell me some things you like and don't like about your school.

Teacher branch:
What are the teachers, students, school activities like?

21. Describe your favorite holiday.

Teacher branch:
What do you do?
Why do you like it?
How do you celebrate?

22. Tell me about your favorite kind of music.

Teacher branch:
Describe a group/groups that you like.
When do you listen?

23. Tell me about what are you planning to do after high school.

Teacher branch:
Why is this an interesting job to you?
What will you do?
How are you preparing for this job?
(Can be done in present tense. Caution: detailed description of a job is Advanced level question)

24. Describe your television viewing: how often and why you watch.

Branch:
What do you think about television in general?

Part Two: Student Question
Ask me a couple of questions:
(Must be capable of asking questions to be intermediate. Don't forget.)

Part Three: Novice Questions (Ten Desperate Questions)
If those don't work, go into these:

a) In each category, start with the first question; attempt to have student continue with the list of vocabulary as applicable.
b) Do as many categories as time allows, leaving a few seconds for closure.
c) Use the starred question(s) and props if the first doesn't elicit an answer.
d) You are trying to get the student to give you at least 15 words in [target].

Clothing: What are you wearing today? And this?
*Prop: What's this/that?

Time: What time is it?
*Do you have the time?
*What time do you have target class?

Weather: What's the weather like?
*Is it [opposite]. When does it rain/snow/etc. here?

Age: How old are you? And your mom, dad, sister, brother?
*How old is your [mom]?

Colors: What's your favorite color?
*Prop: What color is this/that?

Body parts: What's this/that? And that?

Classroom objects: Where's the door? And the ...?
* What's this/that?

Date: What's the date? And your birthdate? And the date of Christmas?
* Prop: point to calendar

Numbers: Do you know how to count?
*Prop: (show fingers) How much is this? Continue, please.

Days of the week: What day is today? Continue, please.
* Is this Monday?

Family: Who's in your family? And, also?
* Do you have a mom or dad?

Food: What do you eat?
*Do you like salad? If yes: and also? If no: well, what do you like?

Closure: Well, thanks, good-bye!

Practice; practice; practice the technique of PSP.

Be sure your students know exactly what is expected of them and that they have experienced four-skill assessments following the PSP formats many times. Use the techniques as achievement tests or pro-chievement tests for every lesson. **Don't practice the specific content, just the format.** The content will be practiced in the context of a lesson. Students will place high on pro-chievement tests because the material is fresh in their minds. A proficiency test is more difficult.

Give explicit instructions.

Tell students to talk as much as possible in target, not to speak English, to correct themselves if they make a mistake, but not to worry about mistakes because we are not counting errors. Tell them you are going to ask them to ask you a question. Practice how to say, "Describe, talk to me about, ask me a question," and other terms used in the interview. If everyone who gives the sample practices with his/her students, no students will have an unfair advantage. Explain to students that they should try to think in the target language and use the language they know. Explain general errors after the practice samples. Use the information you gain to make improvements in your program.

The interviewer has a great deal of power.

You will have a tendency to treat your students differently from other students. That's why it's a good idea to trade students or to have someone else check a random sample of your students. It's important to be neutral when testing any students. have students draw numbers for the questions you ask. Leave all of the questions on the test, even if you haven't covered some of the topics.

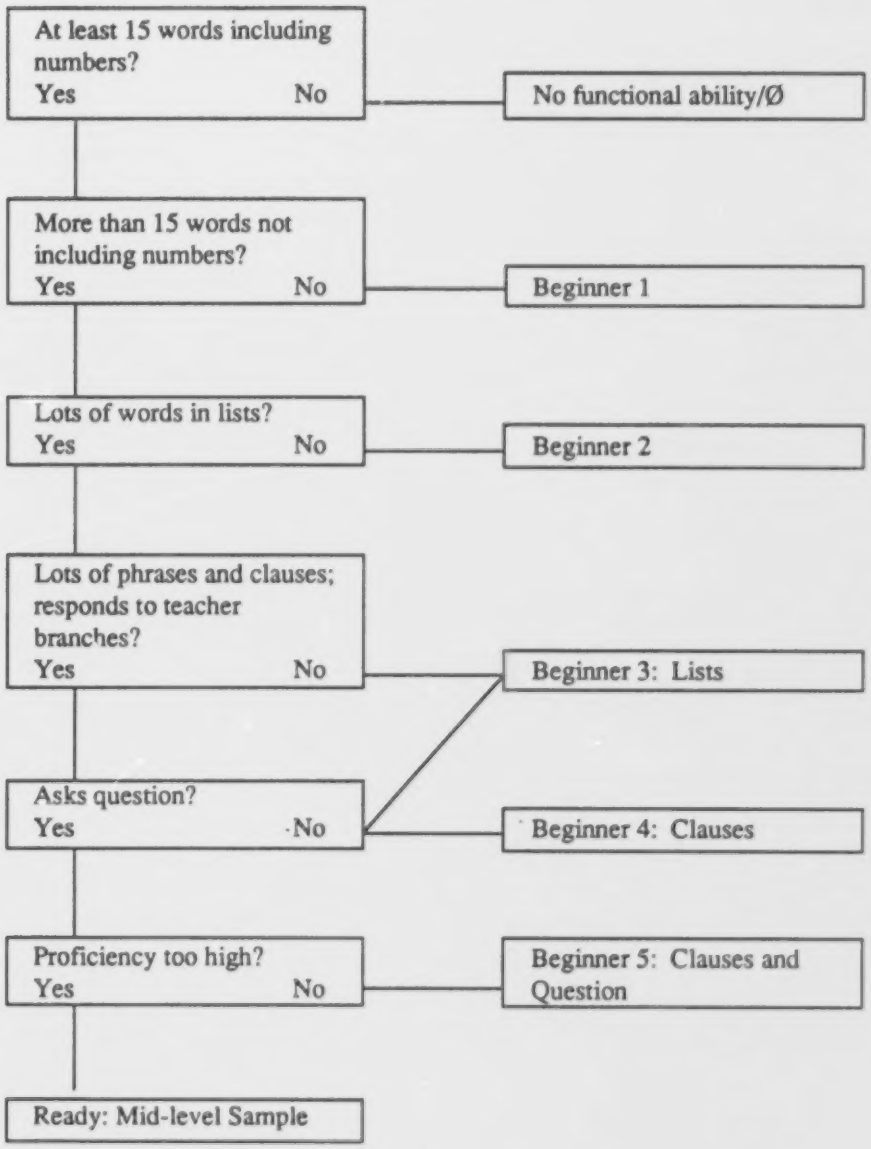
Our publics want relevant data.

Testing data is necessary because grades are not standard from classroom to classroom, let alone from school to school or level to level. Our publics—parents, community members, legislators—want to know how Colorado students are doing. PSP is an effort to standardize the assessment process. Its success depends on your neutrality.

Oral proficiency rating requires the full OPI.

The PSP network can continue its independent work on the writing, reading and listening assessments, but we cannot specify official oral proficiency levels without using the ACTFL/ETS OPI with a certified tester. Our oral assessments will use other terms. The Colorado Department of Education recommends the official OPI as an exit exam--an exhibition--for students who have completed three or more years in a district program.

Flowchart for Beginner's Interview



	Explanation of Flowchart
No functional ability	The interviewee did not utter more than fifteen target words unless you include counting.
Beginner 1	The interviewee produced more than fifteen target words without counting.
Beginner 2	Although the interviewee attempted to utter sentences, she/he "speaks in lists". The actual number of words uttered is small. For example, the following utterance in English is not a clause; it is a list of words. If the utterance included a correctly conjugated verb, it would be a clause: I to play soccer, volleyball and tennis.
Beginner 3: Lists	Although the interviewee attempted to utter sentences, she/he "speaks in lists". (See Beginner 2, above.) Some of the utterances were clauses. The interviewee produced many words.
Beginner 4: Clauses	More than 50% of the utterances were clauses rather than lists. (See Beginner 2, above.)
Beginner 5: Clauses and Question	The interviewee answered in clauses and asked a question.
Ready for Mid-level test	The interviewee performed too well to remain confined to the beginning assessment instrument.

Student utterances are in boldface.

Hello
Fine, and you?
What's your name?
My name is Christine.
Christine, are you a student here at Hinkley?
Excuse me?
Are you a student here at Hinkley?
Yes.
Where do you live?
I live on Hannibal Street.
Describe your house, please.
It is white and gray and big and uh...two levels.
Well, with whom do you live?
I live with my mother and my stepfather.
Do you have brothers or sisters?
I have a brother and two sisters.
How old are they?
My brother are...is 21 and my sisters are 29 and 27.
Okay thank you.

Students responses are in boldface. English is in parentheses.

My name is Mary, and you?
Dallas.
Dallas, how are you?
Um, very good.
Ah, what's the weather like?
It's cold.
And also?
Uh, it makes raining. (Wait, would you repeat the question again?)
Hm? Sorry…I don't understand.
(Never mind, never mind.)
What's the weather?
Oh, it makes raining.
Oh, and where do you live?
I don't know.
What are you studying?
Spanish, Spanish One.
And other classes, too?
Nah, I don't know.
Um which sports do you like?
I don't know.
What's the time?
Um, I don't know.
What color is this?
Grey?
And this?
White.
And here?
Um, I don't know…white, black, blue, (the wall over there) green, red.
What's this?
Um, I don't know…the paper, the pen, um ('forgot…I know what that is…)
And what's this?
The, the hat…um (I forget)…I don't know. Coat…coat? I don't know.
This?
(I don't know how to say bluejeans) I don't know. The shoes…I don't know.
Hm, what's the date?
What's today's date…um, I don't know.
Can you count?
Count? 1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10…let's see, no… (11, I know this…I forget) oh.

Student responses are in boldface. English is in parentheses.

My name is Mary, and you?
I'm Sirena.
Sirena?
Yes.
How are things?
Fine.
What are you studying here?
I study /error/ French, Math /error/ European history, um of Art /error/.
Yes and what's your favorite class?
Um, I like art.
Yes, why?
It's fun.
Um, where do you live?
I live in this (area) this region.
With whom?
With my family: my mom, my dad /error/ and two brothers.
Okay, what's your mom like?
She's a good person.
Yes, but, well, physically.
Um, she has grey hair; she isn't very short /error/ or very (I don't know how to say tall.) She has blue eyes /error/ . She...
What do you do after school?
In the fall, I do gymnastics, and in the summer, or in the spring /error/ I skate /error/ or /error/ skateboard...it's a lot of homework.
I understand that; ask me a question.
Do you have children?
Yes, I have three children. Thanks a lot. Goodbye.

Section Three — Beginner Writing Assessment

The writing topics and a sample administration sheet are provided. To administer the samples in their school, the teachers cut and paste the topics onto the sheet provided. Two samples are run for each student--two different topics on two different days. A flowchart for rating the samples is included. Teachers discuss the parallels between the speaking and writing assessments.

Writing Topics:

what you do at school

things, animals, and people you live with or near

what you do when it is cold, hot rain, or snowy

sports, hobbies, and other activities you are familiar with

what you do in the summer, winter, spring, or fall

what you do before school, after school, or on the weekend

what you and your family do around the house

what you eat and how and where you eat lunch or dinner

your room at home

your dream vacation

a person you know: appearance, personality, habits

your family

what you do in your English/history/math class

what you like and what you don't like about school this year

what you see as you look out a window at school

a nice place you go often and what you do there

yourself

something in your life that isn't fair

how something you are studying in school will help you

comparing two people you know

Section Three — Beginner Writing Assessment

1. Your pen-pal has written you and given you all sorts of information. Make a list of at least ten items (more, if you can think of them in five minutes) about:

(paste topic here)

Write your list here:

1 _____ 6 _____

2 _____ 7 _____

3 _____ 8 _____

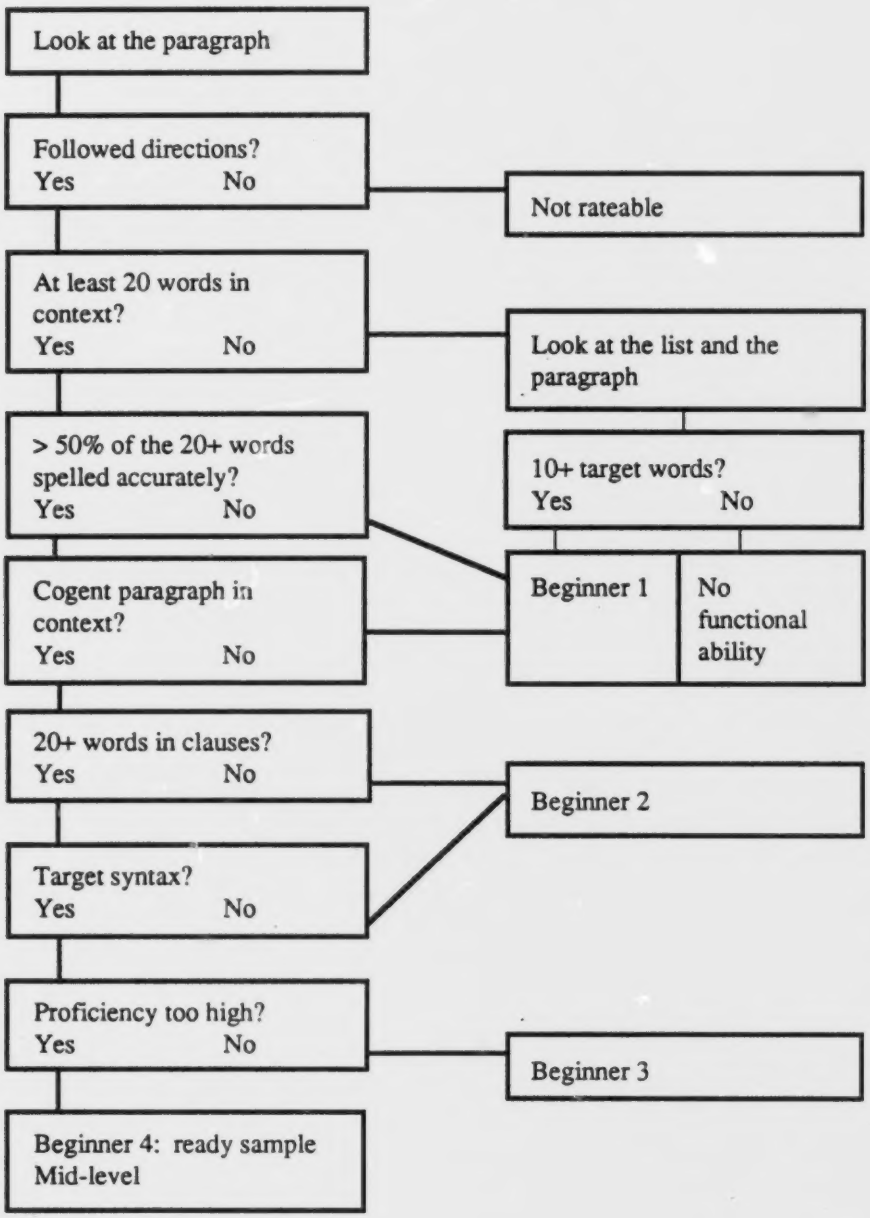
4 _____ 9 _____

5 _____ 10 _____

2. You have 20 minutes to write at least 25 and no more than 50 words about:

(paste same topic here)

Flowchart Beginner Writing Sample



	Explanation of Flowchart
Not rateable	The writer did not follow instructions. She/he will retake the assessment.
No functional ability	The writer produced fewer than 10 target words.
Beginner 1	The writer produced 10 correctly spelled target words. Although the writer attempted to write sentences, the words are considered lists due to a lack of grammatical accuracy.
Beginner 2	The writer attempted several clauses on the specified topic. Some of the attempted clauses remain lists. The clauses and lists contain 20 or more accurately spelled target words.
Beginner 3	The writer wrote several clauses on the specified topic. More than 50% of the clauses displayed target rather than English syntax. More than 50% of the writing on the topic was in clauses.
Beginner 4: Ready Mid-level	The writer performed too well for the beginner level test.

Section Four — Beginner and Mid-level Reading and Listening Assessments

Participants are given the listening assessment in English, or, preferably, another appropriate language. Discussion on administration and evaluation follows. Rationale, administration and possible evaluation techniques for the reading instrument are discussed. Participants brainstorm possible instruments for the intermediate listening and reading assessments.. We present three formats for each of the skills. Participants choose a format and compare a sample text in language groups.

The listening and reading tests and the novice level flowcharts were piloted in 1989-1990. The intermediate flowcharts will be tested this year.

The generation of texts for the reading and listening comprehension samples and questions will be an annual event. Texts will be written by a team of teachers followg the ACTFL proficiency guidelines for Intermediate mid reading. Teachers will choose one of the formats when assessing students.

The texts are not to be practiced by teachers with students prior to the test. We have included a sample text.

Teacher directions: Reading Selection

1. Translate the passage into the target language

2. Choose a format. Paste your passage over the sample passage. Make copies.

3. Give the students 20 minutes. Collect the sheets if most are done. Keep track of the amount of time you allow.

Reading Format 1

You found this note in the hall. It's for Jenny from Sophie, the target exchange student. Since it is in target, you have to tell Jenny what it says.

Dear Jenny,

I am in history now. I'm bored, but there is this really cute guy next to me. He is new and Teri tells me he is in her German class. His name is Paul. He plays in a band, he skateboards, skis, and swims. What a hunk. Today he is wearing shoes, but no socks, a T-shirt, and 501 jeans. He's tall with black hair. Should I talk to him??? He lives on my street. Or should I call him?? Should I ask him to the Morp Dance? Write me!

Sophie

1. Read the selection.

2. Write at least eight things you understand from the note.

   1

   2

   3

   4

   5

   6

   7

   8

3. Write a summary of the above selection including as much detail as possible. It's not necessary to translate word for word.

Reading Format 2

You found this note in the hall. It's for Jenny from Sophie, the target exchange student. Since it is in target, you have to tell Jenny what it says.

Dear Jenny,

I am in history now. I'm bored, but there is this really cute guy next to me. He is new and Teri tells me he is in her German class. His name is Paul. He plays in a band, he skateboards, skis, and swims. What a hunk. Today he is wearing shoes, but no socks, a T-shirt, and 501 jeans. He's tall with black hair. Should I talk to him??? He lives on my street. Or should I call him?? Should I ask him to the Morp Dance? Write me!

Sophie

1. Read the selection.

2. Summarize the story with four drawings, like a cartoon.

3. Include an explanation in English under each drawing.

Teacher Directions: Listening Assessment

1. Translate the passage into the target language.

2. Choose a format. Hand out the appropriate answer sheet.

3. Read the selection to the students once.

4. Give the students 10 minutes. Collect the sheets if most are finished. Keep track of the time you allow.

Sample Listening Passage

"I have to get up every day at 6:30 in the morning to start my day. I wash, dress, and eat breakfast. Then I take the bus to school. My first class is history. I'm really smart in that class! But my favorite classes are music and target. I play the guitar in band and I'm a member of target club.

"My other classes are only okay. The class I hate is English. I like my English teacher but I don't like the books we read and study.

"After school I don't go home until 5:00 p.m. because I have football practice. When I get home, I eat dinner because I'm so hungry. Then I do my homework and I go to bed."

Listening Format 1

1. Listen to the following passage.

2. Write at least eight things you heard about the speaker.

   1

   2

   3

   4

   5

   6

   7

   8

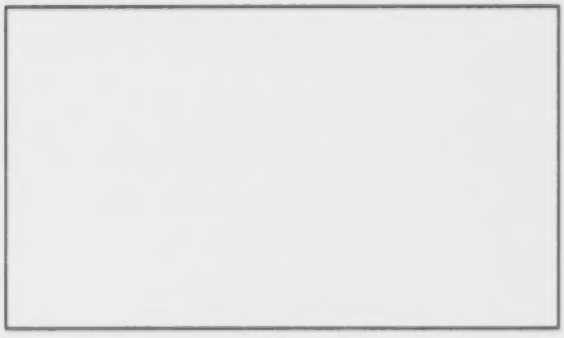
3. Write a summary of the passage including as much detail as possible.

Listening Format 2

1. Listen to the following passage.
2. Summarize the story with four drawings, like a cartoon strip.
3. Include a short explanation in English under each drawing if you wish.

A

B



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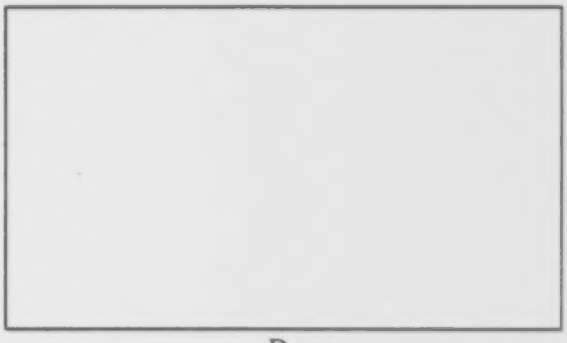
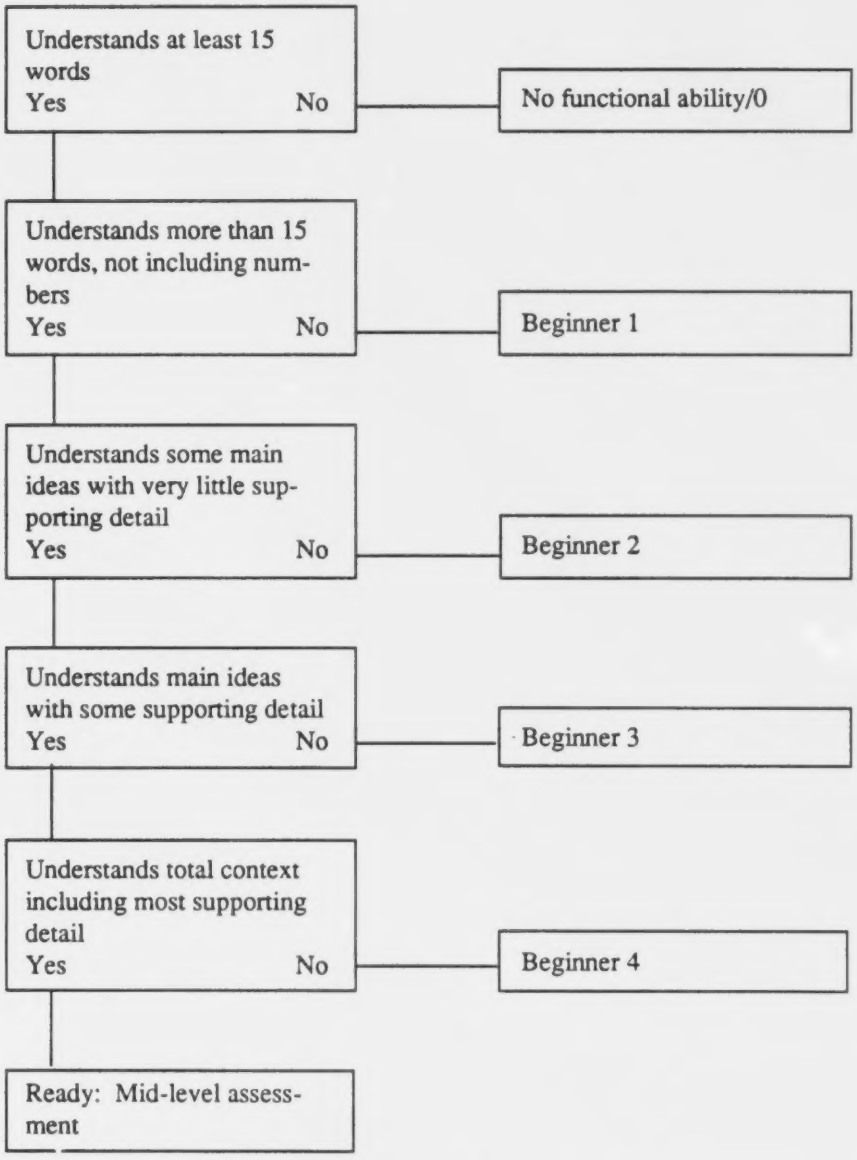


D

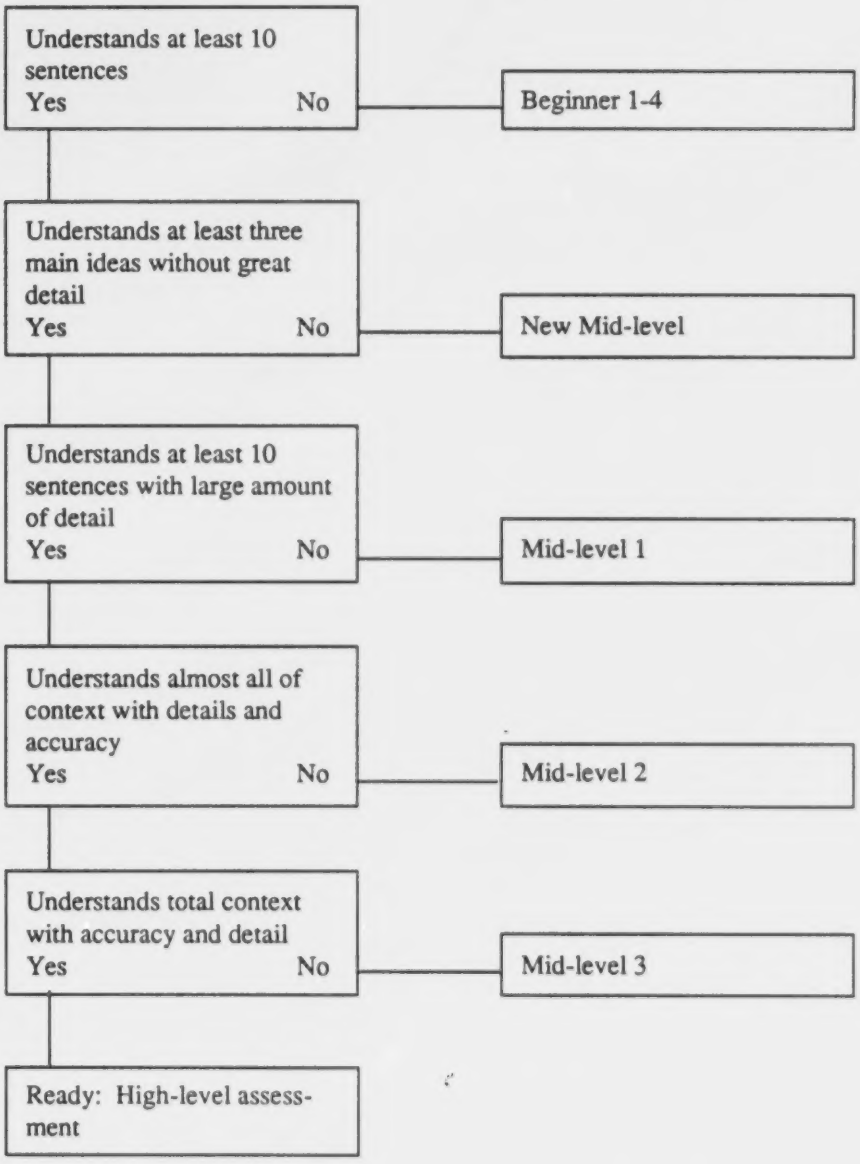
Listening Format 3

1. Listen to the following passage.
2. Write:
    1. How the speaker travels.
    2. What the speaker's favorite classes are.
    3. Where the speaker does really well and why.
    4. The speaker's favorites.
    5. What the speaker doesn't like and why.
    6. Why the speaker stays late.

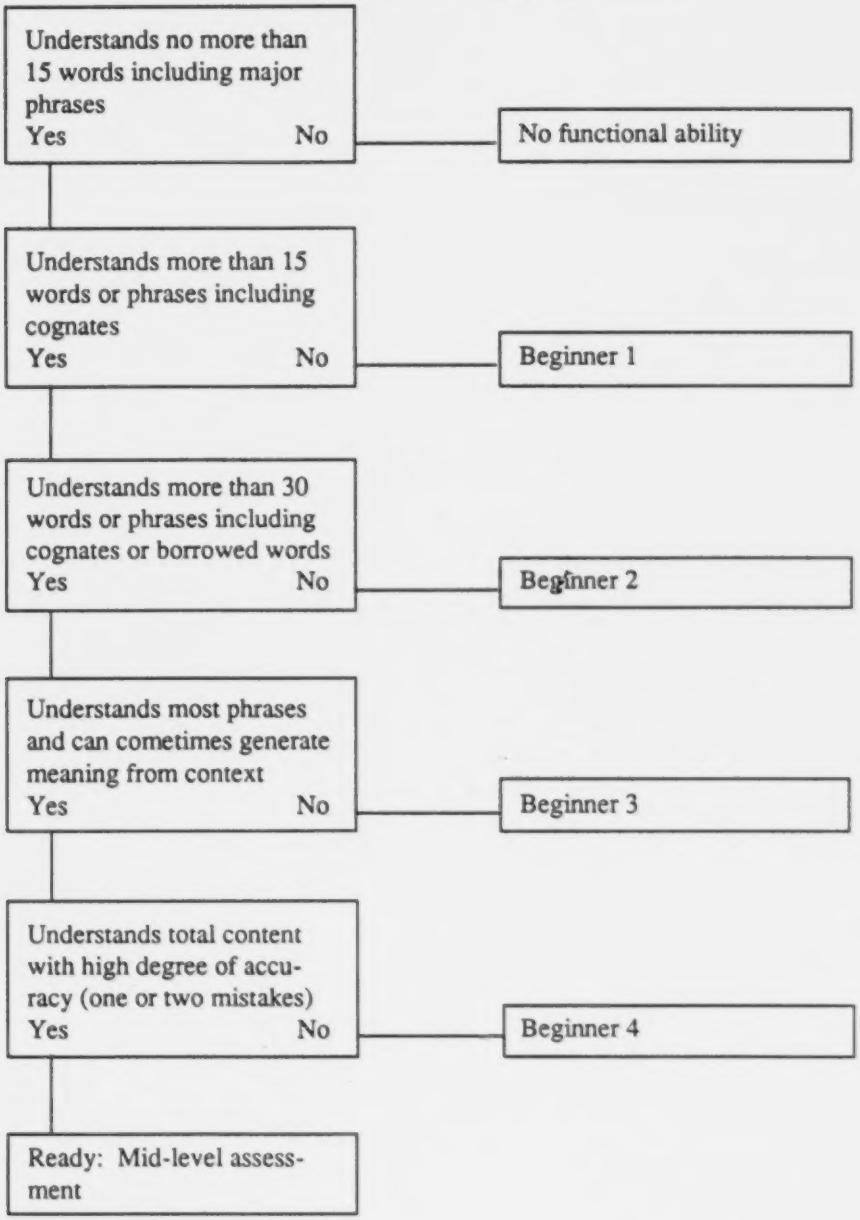
Preliminary Flowchart for Beginner Listening Comprehension



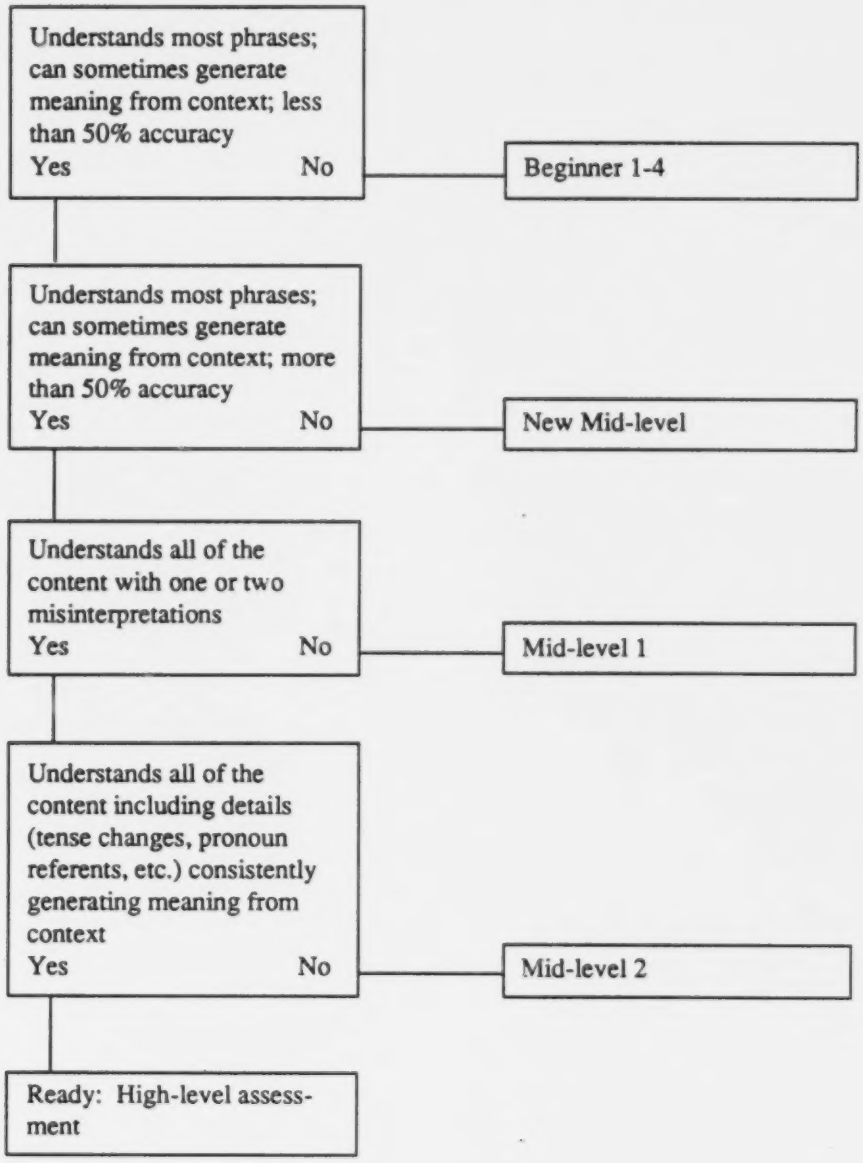
Flowchart for Mid-level Listening Comprehension



Flowchart for Beginner Reading Comprehension



Flowchart for Mid-level Reading Comprehension


Understands most phrases; can sometimes generate meaning from context; less than 50% accuracy
Yes
No
Beginner 1-4
Understands most phrases; can sometimes generate meaning from context; more than 50% accuracy
Yes
No
New Mid-level
Understands all of the content with one or two misinterpretations
Yes
No
Mid-level 1
Understands all of the content including details (tense changes, pronoun referents, etc.) consistently generating meaning from context
Yes
No
Mid-level 2
Ready: High-level assess-ment

Section Five — Mid-level Speaking Assessment

It is assumed that participants are familiar with the novice speaking instrument. Participants listen to student performances of situations. They practice rating as a group. Participants administer the situation component to each other in various languages.

This assessment is for students who have rated Ready for Mid-level Sample on the Colorado Foreign Language Proficiency Sample Project Beginner Speaking Assessment. The assessment is probably best suited for second and third year students. However, it is a pilot; we need your feedback.

The intermediate assessment will consist of two components: an interview component and a two-part situation component. You may start with either component with a particular student.

Administration of the Interview Component:

The teacher again uses the novice interview. S/he asks four questions instead of two. Students who perform at the Ready for Intermediate Sample or higher level on each branching, that is, those who respond to teacher-branches with clauses more than 50% of the time, and who can ask two or three questions, proceed to the situation component. These students are marked in the teacher's gradebook as having tested out of the novice interview component and do not take it again.

Students must complete both parts of the assessment successfully to be considered Mid-level. (A label other than Intermediate, Novice-High or Novice-Mid is given to the student rating because this is **not** a full ACTFL/ETS OPI.)

When to Assess Students

Students are assessed as the year goes on—one or two a day. The teacher evaluates only those students who s/he thinks will do well; teachers usually know because they work with the students everyday. We are interested in habit, not luck. Those who don't do as well as expected are interviewed again at a later date. If it is possible to assess every student they will all profit from the experience. However, program evaluation is possible with a random sample.

Administration of the situation component:

1) The teacher gives each student two situations on two different days. Tasks are provided in four language functions:
   a) Socializing/S
   b) Getting information/I
   c) Expressing personal feelings/F
   d) Persuading others to adopt a course of action/P

2) The situations are marked and numbered per function.
   a) Students perform two situations, each from a different function category.
   b) Students draw a number out of a hat.
   c) Students have one minute to read and mentally prepare the situation.
   d) Students should not see any other situations. They return the copy of the situation.

3) The teacher initiates the interaction and cooperates fully with any student response in context varying her/his responses with each student.
   a) The teacher indicates which role the student will play.
   b) The student is instructed to make at least four utterances in context.
   c) Utterances beyond four are not counted.
   c) The teacher runs the situation sample in or outside of class.

4) A point is awarded for each utterance—up to four—which
   a) is in context and logical order,
   b) uses target syntax, and
   c) would be comprehensible to a native speaker.

5) Students receive 0-4 points per assessment. For now, a student who is rated Ready for Intermediate Assessment on the four-question novice interview and 6-8 on the situation component is considered a Possible Intermediate. Let us know what you think after you assess 10-20 students. The test cannot label students as Intermediates, Novice-Highs or Novice-Mids as it is **not** equivalent to the ACTFL/ ETS OPI.

6) Students and teacher practice the format many times during the year. It is hoped that the teacher will incorporate the technique into each lesson. The teacher, however, does not use the situations chosen for the official assessment. It is beneficial to write situations based on your own text/curriculum. The Colorado Department of Education has published several collections of situations based on popular

texts; contact Mary Apodaca.

7) To practice with students who are not accustomed to extended discourse, the teacher breaks down the situation into single thoughts to guide the student. These are just suggestions; students may use their own ideas.

Example:

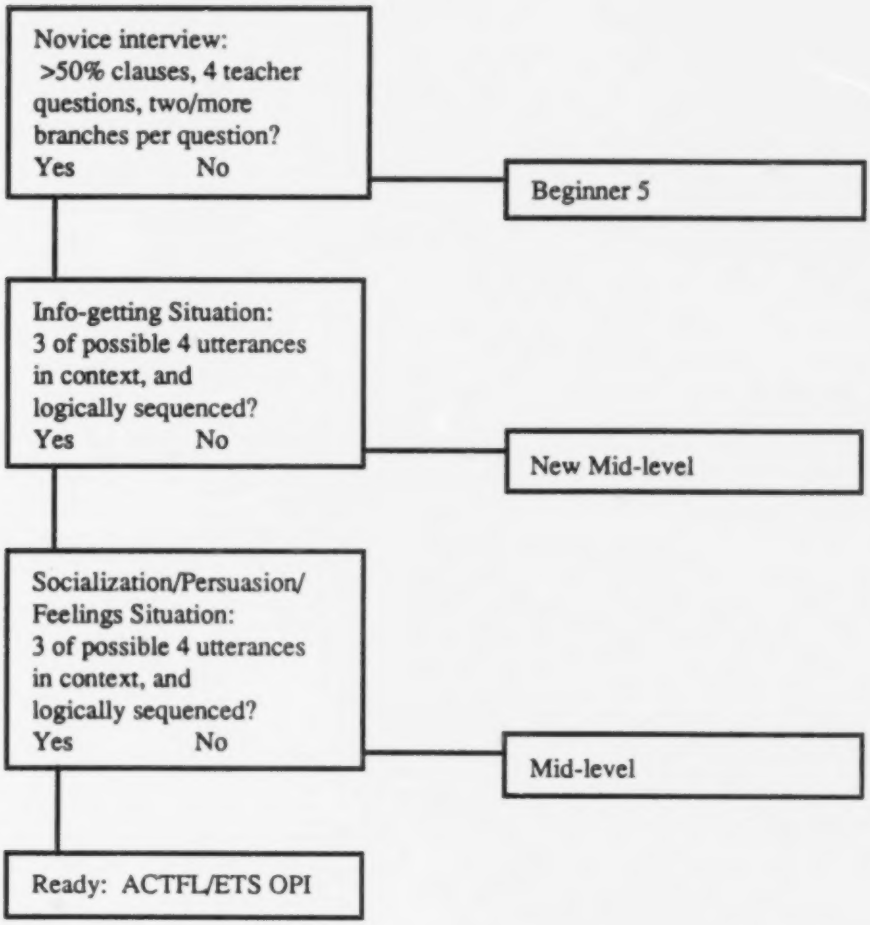
You are taking your little sister/brother to the daycare center for the first time. Find out about the center.

A. Greet the daycare person. (Greetings don't count as an utterance.)
   1) Tell her/him why you are there.
   2) Ask when the center is open: time of day/days of week.
   3) Ask how much it costs.
   4) Say whether or not your sister/brother will stay this day.

B. Say goodbye. (Greetings don't count as an utterance.)

8) The novice interview assessment instrument will be expanded to include more questions in order to be better suited for the intermediate assessment. Please send intermediate questions to Mary Apodaca, CDE, 201 East Colfax Avenue, Denver 80203.

Flowchart Intermediate Speaking Sample
(Rated PSP NM/NM+ on Novice Sample)



	Explanation of Flowchart
Beginner 1-4	The interviewee was not ready for the Mid-level test
Beginner 5	The interviewee sustained speaking in clauses and asked a question, but could not handle a situation. She/he is right between the beginning and mid-levels.
Mid-level: one situation	The interviewee spoke in clauses for a sustained period of time, and asked questions in order to get information in a simple situation.
Mid-level: two situations	The interviewee spoke in clauses for a sustained time, asked questions, and reacted appropriately in two simple situations.

Information Getting
Direct students to make at least four statements/questions per topic below.
Teacher initiates.

I1 You're a police officer helping a lost child. Find out enough to locate the parents.

I2 You're the receptionist in the clinic. A new patient has come in to get the fall sports physical. Get the pertinent information.

I3 Your car has broken down on a deserted stretch of road; you manage to stop a passing motorist. Find out how far the nearest town is, where there is a garage, if s/he can give you a lift, etc.

I4 You are taking your child to a daycare center. You ask the teacher in charge about the center.

I5 You're in a foreign city. Call the hotel desk to find out about entertainment tonight.

I6 You're interviewing a person for a job.

I7 You run a dating service, you need enough information from a client to match him/her with a date.

I8 You are a police officer questioning an individual who has just witnessed a robbery.

I9 My car has broken down on a deserted stretch of road. You stop to find out how you can help.

I10 You are in charge of a daycare center. Find out the information necessary to enroll my child.

I11 You're in a foreign city. Call the hotel desk to find out about entertainment tonight--movies, live performances, concert; time, price, location, etc.

I12 I'm lost in a foreign city. Find out how you can help.

Socialization
Direct students to make at least four statements per topic below.
Teacher initiates.

S1 Discuss when, where, with whom, and what you're taking when you go swimming.

S2 Discuss plans for the dance next Friday night. You're the head of the planning committee.

S3 Discuss redecorating your bedroom; you don't have much money.

S4 Discuss plans for going shopping: where, with whom, when.

S5 Invite someone out on a date.

S6 Describe your dream car.

S7 Discuss a ski trip you're going to take.

S8 Tell a sick friend what's been going on at school.

S9 Plan a slumber party at a cabin in the country next weekend.

S10 Plan the next school dance/pep rally/etc.

Persuasion
Direct students to make at least four statements per topic below.
Teacher initiates.

P1 Convince your parent to let you use the car for a club activity. You'll be driving five friends and s/he doesn't like you to drive more than three.

P2 Talk the teacher into letting you have one more day for your term paper. S/he has very strict rules on this.

P3 Persuade the principal to let your class have a party for the holidays. There's a school rule against it.

P4 Convince the coach that you are really too sick to participate today.

P5 Persuade your parents to allow you to be a foreign exchange student.

P6 Convince the coach that the music contest is more important than Friday night's game/ match. Or convince the music teacher that the game/ match is more important.

P7 Convince your parents to let you drive the family car to Florida for spring break.

P8 Convince your teacher that you did the homework but that something happened to it.

Feelings
Direct students to make at least four statements per topic below.
Teacher initiates.

F1 You've just been accepted by three different colleges. Tell how you feel about each one.

F2 Talk about three holidays and how you feel about each one.

F3 Tell how you feel about her/ him when your (ex) best friend takes your steady away.

F4 Tell how you feel about studying when you flunk a test that you thought you had prepared for.

F5 Your parents just brought home a new baby brother/ sister. Tell how you feel about the new addition to the family.

F6 Tell how you feel about studying when you ace a test you didn't study for.

F7 Tell how you feel about your school when your team wins/loses in the last ten seconds.

F8 Tell how you feel when you fall up the stairs and drop your books in front of everyone.

F9 Describe what you think when your friend compliments you on your new haircut that you hate.

English Transcription: German Situation
Student responses are in boldface
Situation: Try to talk the teacher into letting you have one more day for your term paper. S/he has very strict rules against it.

Where's your term paper?
I need another day.
Why?
I have lots of things to write.
For example?
My name is not there yet.
Your name is not important. What else? Did you type it?
Yes, but it is not done yet.
Well, are you typing it yourself or is your mother typing it for you?
I am typing it myself. It is on a computer so that it is nice.
And when can you have it?
I can have it tomorrow.
Well then you know that you will not receive an A? That you will receive a B if it is late?
Okay.

Section Six — Mid-level Writing Assessment

It is assumed that participants are familiar with the beginner writing instrument. The intermediate instruments are discussed. Student samples are evaluated.

How to join the project:

- Run two intermediate writing samples of differing formats (postcard, note to parent/ telephone message, situation) with students who score Novice Mid , or Ready for Intermediate Assessment on the PSP Beginner Writing Sample.
- Use the format provided. Be sure to explain "target" to the students.
- Rate the samples using the rubric below. Send a copy of one rated sample per format selected at random to Mary Apodaca, CDE, 201 E. Colfax, Denver, CO 80203. Specify the number of years the student has studied the target language.
- Provide us with feedback on the format, topics, and evaluation process. Your student samples will help us develop the assessment process.
- Use this format to write your own tests in your classes. Be sure to specify the form of the student writing and the audience.

Provisional Rubric
PSP Mid-level Writing Sample

Beginner 3-4	Resembles Intermediate-low, but does not sustain. (50% or less.)
New Mid-level	Most sentences with target syntax...correct grammar more than 50% of the time.
Mids level 1	Uses one tense consistently and correctly...more than 50% accuracy.
Mid-level 2	Uses one tense in addition to the present with more than 50% accuracy .
Mid-level 3: Ready for Exhibition	Proficiency obviously too high for this assessment.

Postcard 1: Imagine that you are a target student who has just arrived in the United States for a year-long visit. Write a postcard to your parents at home telling about your American host family. You may use the other side of this paper for a rough draft. Write at least 50 words and no more than 150. You have 30 minutes.

Postcard 2: Write a postcard to your target pen-pal telling him/her that you are on your way to his/her town to visit or about a trip that you are on with your family. You may use the other side of this paper for your first draft. Write at least 50 words—no more than 150. You have 30 minutes.

Note to parent 1: You're an exchange student. Write a note for your target mom/dad telling her/him when you'll be home and why. You may use the other side of this paper for your first draft. Write at least 50 words—no more than 150. You have 30 minutes.

Note to parent 2: You're an exchange student. Write a note for your target mom/dad asking permission for an activity you want to do this weekend. You may use the other side of this paper for your first draft. Write at least 50 words—no more than 150. You have 30 minutes.

Telephone message: You're an exchange student. Write a message for your target big sister/brother telling her/him that a friend called. (You decide who.) Tell where, when, and why to meet this person. You may use the other side of this paper for your first draft. Write at least 50 words—no more than 150. You have 30 minutes.

Situation 1: Hotel: Write a letter to a hotel in target country. Give/ask for some of the following information: names, reservation, what you need in your room, whether you can pay with travelers' checks, if you want a private bath, the day you will arrive, if meals are included, etc. Write in target. You may use the other side of this paper for your first draft. Write at least 50 words—no more than 150. You have 30 minutes.

Situation 2: Health: The school nurse is not in her office. Write a note explaining why you need to see her as soon as she returns. Give specific information. Write in target. You may use the other side of this paper for your first draft. Write at least 50 words—no more than 150. You have 30 minutes.

Situation 3: Invitation: Write a letter inviting a friend somewhere. Include some of the following information: time, place, activity, prices (if appropriate), dress, means of transportation, etc. Write in target. You may use the other side of this paper for your first draft. Write at least 50 words—no more than 150. You have 30 minutes.

Situation 4: Daily activity: Your parent left a list of chores for you to do. Write a note to her/him explaining which ones you accomplished before you left to meet your friends and why you didn't do others. Write in target. You may use the other side of this paper for your first draft. Write at least 50 words—no more than 150. You have 30 minutes.

Situation 5: Work: Your pen-pal knows that American students often hold part-time jobs. Write a letter explaining what kinds of jobs are available and where, the hours they might work, how much the jobs pay, etc. Write in target. You may use the other side of this paper for your first draft. Write at least 50 words—no more than 150. You have 30 minutes.

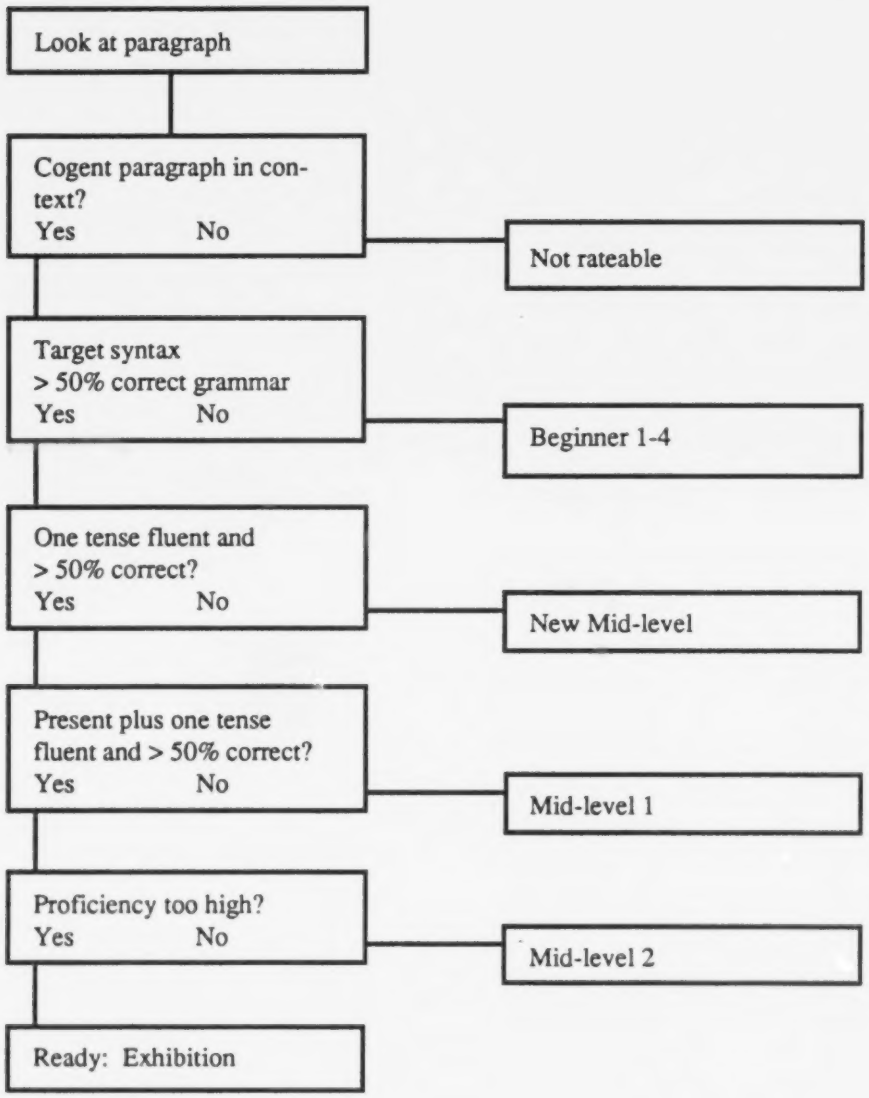
Situation 6: Sports: You are a reporter for the school newspaper. Your assignment is to write an article about a sports event. Write in target. You may use the other side of this paper for your first draft. Write at least 50 words—no more than 150. You have 30 minutes.

Writing Sample Mid-level
Situation 4: Daily activity

Your parent left a list of chores for you to do. Write a note to her/him explaining which ones you accomplished before you left to meet your friends and why you didn't do others. Write the note in the target language. Write at least 50 words—no more than 150.

You have **30 minutes.** You may use a separate sheet for your first draft if you wish.

Flowchart Mid-level Writing Sample
(Rated Novice Mid on PSP Novice Writing Sample)



To: Those interested in foreign language proficiency assessment

Date: Winter/Spring 1990

Subject: The Colorado Proficiency Sample Project

Thank you for your inquiry. The Proficiency Sample Project/PSP is a voluntary, grassroots, teacher-designed and -administered performance assessment. We assess students in four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A ten-member design team creates and refines the instruments. The instruments are piloted by teachers in the proficiency network and by other Colorado teachers who wish to join the network.

The accompanying materials are used in the two-hour awareness workshops which are presented in cooperation with secondary foreign language supervisors and teachers.

One of the goals of the project is for teachers to standardize their assessment techniques. If you are planning to join the project, you will want to go through the training and/or have your training tapes and samples evaluated. This memo will walk you through the handout materials. If you wish further information, please contact Mary Apodaca, Senior Consultant, School Effectiveness Unit, Colorado Department of Education, 201 E. Colfax, Denver, Colorado 80203.

Our goal is to establish a voluntary state-wide assessment program that is so prestigious because of its congruence with state and national goals, its validity in connecting levels and school programs, and its practicality in communicating outcomes to the community that everyone will want to join. This is a working document. Teachers are working and learning together.

Performance assessments show what students can do, not what they know about. Our samples are used to find out if a student can write and speak for communication, read for comprehension, and understand oral language. We quantify the students' performance by following the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages/ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines.

To find out if students can write, we ask students to write part of some kind of a message. To find out if they can speak, we ask them to take part in an interview. To find out if they can read, we have them read another's student's message and tell us (in English) what it says. To find out if they understand oral discourse, we have them listen to another student's speaking sample and to tell us (in English) what went on.

Following is a walk-through of the enclosed materials:

The Colorado Proficiency Sample Project/PSP

Section One: Overview

Page one provides the rationale for the Colorado Department of Education Proficiency Sample Project. A thumbnail sketch of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Proficiency Guidelines is provided on page two to show what novices and intermediates can do with the language. On page three the number of hours in a typical secondary language class is compared to Foreign Service Institute statistics to demonstrate what we can realistically expect our students to do with our target language.

Taped interviews are played to show student performances. English transcriptions are provided. Sometimes taped interviews of their own students are provided by participants or team presenters. A transcription is provided for non-speakers of the target. Discussion of how and why the interviews differ from typical classroom activities—the implications for the classroom includes an explanation of Rebecca Vallette's hierarchy of language acquisition.

Section Two: Beginner Speaking Assessment

This section contains a corpus of questions with an explanation of how to conduct the interview. A flowchart for evaluating the oral samples is included. Following an explanation of the format, participants interview each other—in their third or fourth language. Discussion follows.

Section Three: Beginner Writing Assessment

The writing topics and a sample administration sheet are provided. To administer the samples in their school, the teachers cut and paste the topics onto the sheet provided. Two samples are run for each student—two different topics on two different days. A flowchart for rating the samples is included. Teachers discuss the parallels between the speaking and writing assessments and the holistic approach to evaluating writing samples.

Section Four: Beginner and Mid-level Listening and Reading Assessments

Participants are given the listening assessment in English or, preferably, another appropriate language. Discussion on administration and evaluation follows. Rationale, administration and possible evaluation techniques for the reading instrument are discussed. Participants brainstorm possible instruments for the intermediate listening and reading instruments. We present three assessment omats for each of the skills. Participants may choose a fo1mat and compose a sample text in language groups.

Section Five: Mid-level Speaking Assessment

It is assumed that participants are familiar with the novice speaking instrument. Participants listen to student performances of situations. They practice rating as a group. Participants administer the situation component to each other in various languages.

Section Six: Mid-level Writing Assessment

It is assumed that participants are familiar with the novice writing instrument. The intermediate instruments are discussed. Students' samples are evaluated and discussion follows.

Section Seven Student Writing Samples

Small language-specific groups rate and discuss their ratings of the writing samples. In some workshops teachers who are familiar with the techniques provide copies of their samples for participants.

Section Eight: Appendix

The appendix includes this walk-through you are reading. It also includes a memo to provide feedback to teachers who send in their speaking and/or writing samples for a review of their technique. Members of the proficiency network are sent periodic updates and newsletters. Samples of other memos include a welcoming memo and a memo on how to provide data from school-wide samples.

Date:
To:
From:
Re: Your technique

Thanks for sending us your samples. As you know, this is a peer coaching exercise. We don't consider ourselves experts, just teachers who have had a little more experience doing this. Following are some general comments; I've checked those that pertain to you and I've added a comment after those I think need explanation.

The oral interview: Usually we find people need to:

* do more teacher branching; let the students talk more; push them "within the context", i.e., once you have them talking about one subject. It may be that you didn't tell them beforehand that they should talk, talk, talk in target.

* avoid saying "Good" (or an equivalent). When you do that, it sounds like you're listening to the form and not the message. Say "that's interesting/oh, really?", etc., instead;

* ask other questions besides "Are you a student?" and "Where do you live?". Avoid those for awhile. All questions are equal. Put all the numbers in a hat and let students draw their two numbers. Mix those numbers in again. If you feel that one or two aren't fair, take them out, and tell us about them.

* be sure to branch immediately after yes/no and either/or questions and continue branching. The yes/no answer tells you nothing about the student's proficiency. The expanded version of the interview does not include yes/no or either/or questions.

* remember to have the student ask a question.

Other comments:

Rating: Speaking

	Student #1	Student #2
At least 15 words including numbers		
More than 15 words not including numbers		
Lots of words in lists		
Lots of words in lists, clauses and responds to teacherbranching		
Proficiency too high		
Rating		

The writing sample: Use all of the topics here as in the oral interview. If some don't work, let us know.

Rating: Writing

	Student #1	Student #2
Followed instructions		
20 words in context		
20 words spelled accurately		
Words in clauses		
Target syntax		
Rating		

Please send a copy of this form and any comments to Mary Apodaca, School Effectiveness Unit, Colorado Department of Education, 201 E. Colfax, Denver, Colorado 80203. Continue your comments on the back, if necessary. That will get you onto the PSP Network and let us know how we're doing.

Name _____

Home address _____ Home phone _____

School _____ Phone _____

School address _____

Language _____

Comments:

To:
From: Arvin Blome, Assistant Commissioner
Re: Proficiency Sample Project

We recently reviewed your tapes and writing samples for the Colorado Proficiency Sample Project. I'm happy you have decided to join this important effort.

As you know, the proficiency movement is a force for leading foreign language teachers to actively engage their students in the acquisition of other languages. It's part of our professional community's contribution to school improvement—the concept of student as worker, teacher as coach.

Colorado's statewide performance testing network is an important component of this national commitment. You are now an active member of the Colorado network and as such will receive updates of materials and notification of events. Welcome!

You are to be commended for your efforts to learn, change, and collaborate.

cc: Sue Schafer, Director, School Effectiveness Unit
Mary Apodaca, Senior Consultant

To: PSP Network Members
From: Mary Apodaca
Re: Proficiency Samples

If you run "official samples", that is, if you run samples after we comment on your technique, please send a report to my office. You might run samples of all of your students one at a time in your classes or you might assess all your eligible students at once or you might run samples of a random group. The random group must be chosen by someone other than the teacher.

Please let me know the following:

1) how you ran the sample: one student at a time, all at once, random sample (include a note on how the sample was chosen), etc.;
2) student reactions;
3) foreign language teacher reactions;
4) reactions of other teachers/departments/administrators to your use of alternative assessment methods;
5) administrative details: personnel, logistics: who tested whose students, where you tested them, how you found the time);
6) results per language/gender/school/district of students;
7) use of results: report to parents, community, program improvement, etc.;
8) anything else you consider pertinent.

cc: Sue Schafer, Director, School Effectiveness Unit
Arvin Blome, Assistant Commissioner

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